



DI & HIGH PERFORMERS

DIRECT INSTRUCTION IS EFFECTIVE WITH
HIGHER PERFORMING STUDENTS

A prevalent myth about Direct Instruction (DI) is that a DI implementation cannot provide appropriate instruction for higher performing students. DI programs are designed to teach critical skills effectively and efficiently to any student who doesn't possess the skills covered in the programs. The programs are field tested on both lower and higher performing students and demonstrate high levels of success with higher performing students.

Consider the following:

- In Project Follow Through, the largest educational experiment in the history of the U.S., Direct Instruction was highly effective with middle class students. ***The average reading level for 898 middle class 2nd grade students was grade 4.5.***
- In Oregon, a study involving ***the top performing half of a 2nd grade classroom showed the mean reading performance of students in DI at the 4.6 grade level*** (vs. the 2.7 grade level for the national norm). Reading comprehension was at the 4.4 grade level, and the mean science performance was at the 4.0 grade level, even though the students only received science information through the DI reading program.
- A study of fourth and fifth graders in a predominately middle-class school in Delaware showed that all 28 comparisons of gain scores between Direct Instruction and a competing reading program favored DI. While all groups scored well above the national norm, the DI groups outgained the other groups in all measures--vocabulary, comprehension, total reading and spelling. All of the teachers who used both programs considered DI to be more effective than the competing program and ***they requested to use DI with their students in place of the other program the following year.***

The secret to accommodating higher performing students is to ensure that their initial placement is appropriate, their performance is closely monitored and they are moved into more challenging material as their performance dictates. It is important that schools and districts using DI develop an efficient data collection and monitoring system, such as the system used by schools working with the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI). The goal of the system is to respond to students' performance quickly to ensure students learn as much as possible. Ultimately, the highest performing students finish the Reading Mastery series and move on to content area texts designed for middle school students.

View the NIFDI video, [Helping Kids Soar: Children Reaching Their Full Potential with Direct Instruction](#), online to see how the full immersion DI model accommodates high performing students at two schools in Alliance, Nebraska and Atlanta, Georgia.